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ABSTRACT

The first article is a condensation of an essay and lesson plan focusing on racism in the English language. All language transmits and reinforces societal values. Through a discussion of color symbolism, politics and terminology, "loaded" words and the syndrome of "blaming the victim", this article shows how subtle--and not so subtle--racism pervades the English language. The second article addresses a recent proposal enacted by the American Library Association for aggressive action in the library profession to counteract racism and sexism. The final article reviews the work of best selling children's author, Judy Blume. Blume's books are "in" and supposedly "daring," but this article suggests that the author can be faulted in many ways such as in the lack of feminism, emphasis on competition, unquestioned sex roles, choice of middle class suburban settings, and limited treatment of ethnic and racial issues. (Author/AM)

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INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

ED128523

BULLETIN

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 5, 1976

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LANGUAGE AND RACISM

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COMING ATTRACTION: A special issue on ageism will analyze the images of old people in children's books. Other articles will focus on the myths and realities of being old in our society.

Racism in the English Language

A Short Play on "Black" and "White" Words

Some may **blackly** accuse him of trying to **blacken** the English language to give it a **black** eye by writing such **black** words. They may **denigrate** him by accusing him of being **black-hearted**, of having a **black** outlook on life, of being a **blackguard** which would certainly be a **black mark** against him. Some may **black-brow** him and hope that a **black** cat crosses in front of him because of this **black** deed. He may become a **black** sheep, who will be **blackballed** by being placed on a **blacklist** in an attempt to **blackmail** him to retract his words. But attempts to **blackjack** him will have a "**Chinaman's chance**" of success, for he is not a "**yellow-bellied**" "**Indian giver**" of words, who will **whitewash** a **black** lie. He challenges the purity and innocence (**white**) of the English language. He doesn't see things in **black** and **white** terms, for he is a **white** man if there ever was one. However, it would be a **black** day when he would not "**call a spade a spade**," even though some will suggest a **white** man calling the English language racist is like "**the pot calling the kettle black.**" While many may be **niggardly** in their support, others will be honest and decent—and to them he says, that's very **white** of you.

Readers: We urge you to avoid using the words in bold type in the above tongue-in-cheek essay.

This article is a condensation of "Racism in the English Language," an essay and lesson plan available from the CIBC Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators for $2.00.

Language is a primary transmitter of cultural perspectives, attitudes and biases. A *Saturday Review* editorial stated that language

> . . . has as much to do with the philosophical and political conditioning of a society as geography or climate. . . . people in Western cultures do not realize the extent to which their racial attitudes have been conditioned since early childhood by the power of words to ennoble or condemn, augment or detract, glorify or demean. Negative language infects the subconscious of most Western people from the time they first learn to speak. Prejudice is not merely imparted or superimposed. It is metabolized in the bloodstream of society. What is needed is not so much a change in language as an awareness of the power of words to condition attitudes. If we can at least recognize the underpinnings of prejudice, we may be in a position to deal with the effects.[1]

Perhaps the most obvious aspect of racism in language are terms like "nigger," "spook," "chink," "spic." While these may be facing increasing social disdain, they certainly are not dead. Large numbers of Americans continue to utilize these terms. "Chink," "gook" and "slant-eyes" were in common use among U.S. troops in Vietnam. An NBC nightly news broadcast, in February 1972, reported that the basketball team in Pekin, Illinois, was called the "Pekin Chinks." Even though this had been protested by Chinese Americans, the term continued to be used because it was easy and "meant no harm." Spiro Agnew's widely reported "fat Jap" remark and the "little Jap" comment of lawyer John Wilson during the Watergate hearings are surface indicators of a deep-rooted Archie Bunkerism.

[1] "The Environment of Language," April 8, 1967.

Color Symbolism

The symbolism of white as positive and black as negative is pervasive in our culture. The black/white words used in the "short play" are but one of many aspects. "Good guys" wear white hats and ride white horses, "bad guys" wear black hats and ride black horses. Angels are white; devils are black. The definition of black includes "without any moral light or goodness, evil, wicked, indicating disgrace, sinful," while that of white includes "morally pure, spotless, innocent, free from evil intent."

A children's TV cartoon program, Captain Scarlet, is about an organization called Spectrum, whose purpose is to save the world from an evil, extra-terrestrial force called the Mysterons. Everyone in Spectrum has a color name—Captain Scarlet, Captain Blue, etc. The one Spectrum agent who has been mysteriously taken over by the Mysterons and works to advance their evil aims is Captain Black. The "good" person who heads Spectrum is Colonel White.

Three of the dictionary definitions of white are "fairness of complexion, purity, innocence." These definitions affect the standards of beauty in our culture, in which whiteness represents the norm. "Blondes have more fun" and "Wouldn't you really rather be a blond?" are sexist in their attitudes toward women generally, but are racist white standards when applied to Third World women.

Politics and Terminology

"Culturally deprived," "economically disadvantaged" and "underdeveloped" are terms which mislead and distort our awareness of reality. The

This illustration from Osceola, Seminole Leader *(a 1976 book!) epitomizes both linguistic and visual racism. Labeled a "massacre," the picture reflects the "feathered, painted, tomahawk-wielding Indian" myth and completes the stereotype by showing a terrified white woman (blond, of course). Value-laden adjectives commonly applied to Native Americans that are reinforced by this picture include blood-thirsty, cruel, menacing, terrifying and savage.*

application of the term "culturally deprived" to Third World children in this society reflects a value judgment. It assumes that the dominant whites are cultured and all others are without culture. In fact, Third World children are generally bicultural and many are bilingual, while most white youth have suffered deprivation by growing up in a monocultural, monolingual environment. In his article, "Racism in Everyday Speech and Social Work Jargon" (*Social Work*, July, 1973). David R. Burgest suggests that the term "culturally deprived" be replaced by "culturally dispossessed," and that the term "economically disadvantaged" be replaced by "economically exploited." Both these terms imply an entirely different frame of reference as to the reality of the Third World experience in U.S. society.

Similarly, many nations of the Third World are described as "underdeveloped." These less industrialized nations are generally those which suffered under colonialism and neocolonialism. The "developed" nations are those which exploited the Third World nations' resources and wealth. Therefore, rather than referring to these countries as "underdeveloped," a more appropriate and meaningful designation might be "overexploited." Substitute this term next time you read about "underdeveloped nations" and note the different meaning that results.

"Blaming the Victim"

Terms such as "culturally deprived," "economically disadvantaged" and "underdeveloped" represent a syndrome known as "blaming the victim," which places responsibility for poverty on the victims of poverty. Accordingly, those in power who benefit from and perpetuate poverty are absolved.

Still another example involves the use of "non-white," "minority" or "Third World." While people of color are a minority in the U.S., they are part of the vast majority of the world's population, in which white people are a distinct minority—a fact of some importance in the increasing and interconnected struggles of people of color inside and outside the U.S.

To describe people of color as "non-white" is to use whiteness as the standard and norm against which to measure all others. Use of the term "Third World" to describe all people of color overcomes the inherent bias of "minority" and "non-white." Moreover, it connects the struggles of Third World people in the U.S. with international liberation struggles.

The term "Third World" gained increasing usage after the 1955 Bandung Conference of "non-aligned" nations, which represented a third force outside of the two world superpowers. The "first world" represents the United States, Western Europe and their sphere of influence. The "second world" represents the Soviet Union and its sphere. The "third world" represents, for the most part, nations that used to be, or still are, controlled by the "first world" or West. For the most part, these are nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

"Loaded" Words and Native Americans

Many words lead to demeaning characterizations of groups of people. For instance, it is said that Columbus "discovered" America. To discover something is "to find some existent thing that was previously unknown." Thus, a continent already inhabited by millions of people cannot be "discovered." For history books to continue this usage represents a Eurocentric (white European) perspective on world history and ignores the existence and the perspective of Native Americans.

Distortion of history by the choice of "loaded" words used to describe historical events is a common racist practice. Eurocentrism manipulates words like *victory, conquest, massacre* and *defend* to distort history and justify Euro-American conquest of the Native American homelands. Native American victories are invariably defined as "massacres," while the indiscriminate killing, extermination and plunder of Native American nations by Euro-Americans is defined as victory. Moreover, rather than portraying Native Americans as human beings in highly defined and complex societies, cultures and civilizations, history books use adjectives such as "savages," "beasts," "primitive" and "backward."

Another term which has questionable connotations is "tribe." Morton Fried, writing on "The Myth of Tribe" (*Natural History*, April 1975), states that the word "did not become a general term of reference to American Indian society until the nineteenth century. Previously, the words commonly used for Indian populations were 'nation' and 'people.'" Since "tribe" has assumed a connotation of primitiveness or backwardness, it is suggested that "nation" or "people" replace the term "tribe" whenever possible in referring to Native American peoples.

"Loaded" Words and Africans

The term "tribe" invokes even more negative implications when used in reference to African peoples. As Evelyn Jones Rich has noted (in "Mind Your Language," *Africa Report*, Sept./Oct., 1974), the term is "almost always used to refer to Third World people and it implies a stage of development which is, in short, a put-down."

Conflicts among diverse African peoples such as the Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba in Nigeria are often described as "tribal warfare" while conflicts between Serbs and Croats in Yugoslavia, Scots and English in Great Britain, Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, or the Basques and the Southern Spaniards in Spain are never described in such terms. If we can analyze the religious, cultural, economic and/or political roots of conflicts among European peoples in terms other than "tribal warfare," certainly we can do the same with African peoples, including correct reference to the ethnic groups or nations involved. For example, the terms "Kaffirs," "Hottentot" or "Bushmen" are names imposed by white Europeans. The correct names are always those by which a people refer to themselves. (In these instances Xhosa, Khoi-Khoin and San are correct.)

Other ethnocentric terms frequently used in reference to Africa that should be avoided include "darkest Africa," "primitive," "pagan," "hut," "native" and "jungle." Instead, use "Africa," "traditional," "traditional religion" (or the name of the particular religion referred to), "house," "people" or "inhabitants" and "savanna" or "wooded savanna."

To recognize the racism in language is an important first step. Consciousness of the influence of language on our perceptions can help to negate much of that influence. But it is not enough to simply become aware of the effects of racism in conditioning attitudes. While we may not be able to change the language, we can definitely change our usage of the language. We can avoid using words that degrade people. We can make a conscious effort to use terminology that reflects a progressive perspective as opposed to a distorting perspective. It is important for educators to provide students with opportunities to explore racism in language and to increase their awareness of it, as well as to learn terminology that is positive and avoids perpetuating negative human values.

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ALA Enacts Proposal on Racism, Sexism

The recent American Library Association centennial convention in Chicago, attended by 18,000 librarians from around the country, turned out to be a momentous occasion for the CIBC. In the course of the week-long convention, the proposal for librarian action against racism and sexism, first set forth in our special ALA edition of the *Bulletin* (Vol. 7, No. 4), evolved into a formal resolution that was voted upon by the membership and adopted as official policy by the ALA executive Council. (The resolution as passed appears on page 7.)

Interestingly, what turned out to be a major role for the CIBC at the convention seemed, at first, to be no role at all. For several years, CIBC representatives had attended the annual event, conducting workshops, providing speakers and panelists and distributing anti-racist, anti-sexist materials. This year for the first time we were not scheduled to participate.

Since the controversy between ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee and CIBC had been well publicized in the library journals during the preceding year, we—and many librarians—began to wonder if ALA did not want to confront the issues we had raised.

Throughout the week-long convention, more than 5,000 copies of the CIBC *Bulletin*, extending "A Centennial Challenge" to ALA, were distributed among the delegates. The proposal it contained—"An Action Program for ALA" (see page 5 of last *Bulletin*)—sparked widespread interest and people could be overheard discussing it in hotel halls and lobbies.

Input from Many Groups

The first official consideration of the CIBC proposal for ALA action came from the Social Responsibility Round Table Action Council on Monday, July 19. After voting to endorse it, SRRT members made two important suggestions. Brooklyn College librarian Jackie Eubanks suggested that the proposal be put in the form of a resolution and presented at the full ALA membership meeting scheduled for Friday; and *Wilson Library Journal* Assistant Editor Patrice Harper suggested that specific ALA divisions and units be assigned the responsibility for carrying out each of the proposal's far-ranging objectives.

The rest of the week was spent writing and rewriting the resolution and meeting with Third World and feminist organizations within ALA to ask their input and endorsement. At 6 AM July 22, it was docketed as item #4: The Racism and Sexism Awareness Resolution.

Originally, the proposal had focused on the role of children's librarians, but the Children's Services Division Discussion Group on Sexism in Library Materials objected. Why, they asked, shouldn't adult librarians *also* be required to develop competence in discerning racism and sexism in books? The wording of the proposal was then broadened to put the full ALA membership on record as opposing neutrality on racism and sexism and mandating all ALA members to develop expertise in this area as part of their professional competence.

On Friday, July 23, the final membership session of the convention was held, attended by 750 delegates.

2½-Hour Debate

Early in the two-and-a-half hour debate on the CIBC resolution, ALA president Clara Stanton Jones moved that the resolution's four points be considered separately prior to a final vote on the entire resolution. Passage of her motion was extremely fortunate. Considerable pains had been taken in writing the resolution to make it broad and yet specific enough so that the various ALA divisions and groups would know precisely what they were being called upon to do. By breaking the resolution down into separate components, these tasks could be addressed at length. Moreover, as it turned out, a snowball effect developed, in which favorable action on one point facilitated passage of the next point and greatly enhanced the chances of the whole resolution.

The hottest debate centered on the second point, which directs ALA to prepare a model in-service racism and sexism awareness program. Cries of "censorship" went up, answered by charges that "censorship" mongering was aimed at preventing ALA units from getting involved with real issues. One librarian suggested an amendment—subsequently passed—that would hold all ALA units (not just one) responsible for developing awareness programs. This librarian added that his own consciousness had been raised in a multicultural workshop about Third World cultures, and that he felt such workshops would be beneficial to all librarians.

A Right to Be Racist?

Then came a bombshell. A member, identified by *School Library Journal* reporters as "a Councilor from West Virginia" stood up "to defend intellectual freedom." He said: "I have the right, just as my staff has the right, to our personal beliefs. We have a right to be racist or sexist." Pat Schuman, a former *School Library Journal* editor and now a publisher, shot back: "Not as a librarian paid by public funds, you and your staff don't have that right. It happens to be against the law." A woman who identified herself as a member of the Intellectual Freedom Committee stated that in the past she had had reservations about librarians taking an active stand against racism and sexism but continued, "I no longer believe this contradicts the principle of intellectual freedom, and I am now in favor of ALA undertaking this program."

The third point calls on librarians to assume an advocacy role by educating "library users" to "the pressing problem" of racism and sexism. As

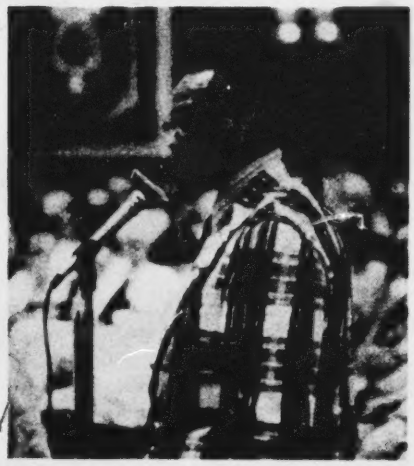
At ALA, nearly everybody was reading the Bulletin.

already mentioned, the original CIBC proposal had singled out children's librarians for this role, but now this was broadened to encompass young adult, reference, adult service, college and research librarians. Passage of this point laid to rest the notion that librarians are passive custodians of information.

The fourth and final point, directing ALA's Resources and Technical Services Division to develop "a coordinated plan for the reform of cataloging practices that now perpetuate racism and sexism" was endorsed in its original form. This point is essentially formal recognition of the innovative cataloging practices initiated by Sanford Berman, Head Cataloger of the Hennepin County (Minnesota) Library (*see* "Don't Look in the Catalog," Vol. 7, No. 4) and Joan Marshall, Associate Professor at Brooklyn College, who is developing a thesaurus on sexist subject headings.

The debate was winding to a close when Stephen Fulchimo from the Medford (Massachusetts) Public Library made the following statement: "The conservatives have been taking a beating in this Association, and it's time we strike back. This resolution is another attempt to undermine traditional American values. I hereby call on all conservatives in the ALA to meet with me in this room at the end of the meeting to make plans for counteracting the radicalization of ALA." His call fell on deaf ears. The final vote, endorsing the entire resolution, was nearly unanimous.

Now, an action of membership does not become binding until it is considered by ALA's 100-member executive Council, and the Council was due to meet that afternoon in final session for the year. In an unprecedented move, the ALA Council voted both to suspend a rule requiring the lapse of 24 hours before consideration of a membership action and to give the CIBC resolution priority over all other business. The ALA Council then voted overwhelmingly in favor of adoption.



William Benton: "We are finally moving with a little deliberate speed."

Major Policy Shift

Without question, the action taken at the ALA meeting constitutes a major policy shift which is far-reaching in its implications. For the first time, a large and important U.S. institution has openly acknowledged the pervasiveness of racism and sexism within its domain and has pledged to take *aggressive* steps towards their elimination. Needless to say, the pledge is only as good as its implementation, and the hard work of concretizing the provisions of the resolution lies ahead. Still, we are encouraged by this initial step and are proud to have played a role in bringing it about.

In the future, we hope ALA's program will be strengthened to require that library schools include racism and sexism awareness training in their curricula in order to receive accreditation. In the meantime, we urge readers to send messages to ALA lauding the organization for its new stance and encouraging implementation of the anti-racism/anti-sexism program. We also urge readers who are not ALA members to seriously consider joining so they can actively participate in the implementation of the resolution. We think *Bulletin* readers will play a major role in achieving the basic changes we are seeking. (A reminder: you do not need to be a librarian in order to join ALA.)

Send congratulatory letters to:

Clara Stanton Jones, President
American Library Association
Detroit Public Library
52-01 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, Mich. 48202

and

Robert Wedgeworth, Executive Director
ALA Headquarters
50 East Huron St.
Chicago, Ill. 60611

1976 ALA COUNCIL DOCUMENT #83

RESOLUTION ON RACISM & SEXISM AWARENESS

Adopted by the ALA Membership and Approved by Council in Meetings Friday, July 23, 1976

Whereas, during the last 200 years the United States has failed to equalize the status of racial minorities and of women, and

Whereas, the American Library Association has professed belief in the principle of equality yet has failed to aggressively address the racism and sexism within its own professional province;

Therefore, be it resolved, That the American Library Association actively commit its prestige and resources to a coordinated action program that will combat racism and sexism in the library profession and in library service by taking the following steps:

☐ The ALA will survey library schools to determine the extent to which racism and sexism awareness training form a part of the curricula and urge that such training be added to the curricula in every library school where it is not now included.

☐ The Library Administration-Personnel Administration Section will develop a model in-service training program providing racism and sexism awareness training for library personnel.

☐ The Public Library Association, the American Association of School Librarians, the Children's Services Division, the Young Adult Division, the Reference and Adult Services Division, and the Association of College and Research Libraries will be urged to develop a program to raise the awareness of library users to the pressing problem of racism and sexism.

☐ The Resources and Technical Services Division will develop a coordinated plan for the reform of cataloging practices that now perpetuate racism and sexism.

Be it further resolved, That the President and Executive Board assess the extent of implementation of these steps and report on progress by the 1977 Annual Conference.

This resolution was placed before the Membership as MR#4; it was subsequently amended and adopted in the above form. Original version was endorsed by: Asian American Caucus; Black Caucus; Board of Directors of REFORMA; Social Responsibilities Round Table Action Council; SRRT Chicano Task Force.

Judy Blume gives sex the "now" treatment, but most traditional values go unchallenged

Old Values Surface in Blume Country

Since the publication of *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret*[1] in 1970, Judy Blume has been established as a best-selling children's author. Quoting a member of F.A.O. Schwarz's children's book department, *Publishers Weekly* (Feb. 24, 1975) reported: "The name of Judy Blume on a book is virtually a guarantee of sales. She is the one author most asked for by young people." According to *PW*, five of her eight novels were bestsellers in 1975.

Born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, in the early 1940's, Blume acknowledges drawing book material from her own experiences as a child growing up in a suburban community. Responding to a fan letter which asked "How do you know all our secrets?", Blume has said: "I really do remember everything that's happened to me from third grade on. I know just how I felt and exactly what I was thinking." No doubt this "in touchness" with the prevailing moods and concerns of so many young readers, and the ability to recreate them with considerable accuracy, accounts for much of Blume's popularity.

Other features of her writing which appeal to children are humor and an openness about "sensitive" issues which, until recently, were excluded from children's literature. Frank discussion of sexual matters occurs in all of Blume's books. Interspersed throughout the books, creating a sort of backdrop for the author's overall approach, is a disarming down-to-earthness. Kids (and sometimes adults) throw up from being car-sick (*It's Not the End of the World*),[2] from eating chocolate-covered ants (*Blubber*)[3] and from being mentally traumatized (*Iggie's House*).[4] They pee in buses and on toilets, pick their noses and fart (*Blubber*), and feel they have to pee when they're nervous (*Deenie*).[5]

In *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret*, which despite its religious sounding title is about eleven- and twelve-year-old girls' sexuality, the protagonist and her friends are preoc-

Judy Blume, children's book author

cupied with getting their menstrual periods. Significantly, the hero is thrilled when she finally gets hers—an unusual occurrence in a children's book. One can assuredly argue that Blume's mini-celebration of menstruation and womanhood is a good antidote to the traditional image of menstruation as "The Curse." Only the most prurient would deny that this positive attitude, plus details about what it's like when you "get it," are useful to girls and to most boys who know little about the subject. (Feminism, however, is not—strictly speaking—Blume's bag, as we will discuss later.) In *Deenie*, the story of a seventh grader's adjustment, sexual and otherwise, to the onset of scoliosis (a spinal discase), the hero masturbates several times throughout the book. Worrisome myths about masturbation are cleared up nicely by a sex education teacher in Deenie's school.

Sexual adjustment, while a favorite, is not the only "problem" in Blume's repertoire: *Iggie's House* deals with racial integration of a white neighborhood; *It's Not the End of the World* tackles divorce; *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*[6] and *Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great*[7] concern sibling rivalry (the latter also explores childhood fears); *Blubber* concerns brutalization of children by other children in school cliques, and the hero of *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*[8] must deal with tensions resulting from his poor family's sudden rise in class status.

The children in Blume's novels, generally from nine to fourteen years of age, are often the hapless victims of forces—parents, schools, society in general—which confuse, frighten and overwhelm them. At the same time, they often serve as the voices of reason and sensibility vis-à-vis the bigotry, irrationality and childishness of this same adult world. The message of most of the Blume books is, simply stated: Even if your parents get divorced, your sibling gets a lot of attention, you get scoliosis or you haven't gotten your period yet, it doesn't mean that your parents don't love you, that you can't make it. Living is a difficult task, but nothing is cut and dried; time heals much and you can work through, overcome or learn to live with such difficulties.

However, it is precisely because Blume pretends to a socially conscious perspective and wants her characters to come to grips with life's problems, that most of her books are disappointing. Too often she poses difficult "problems" and then proceeds to end her stories in confusion, ambivalence and inadequate problem-solving (although it must be noted that having the child's ambivalence be the resolution—which Blume sometimes does—is an OK approach as long as it does not leave the reader ambivalent).

In *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, Peter lives in the shadow of his mischievous brother, Fudge, who gets most of their parents' time and attention. By focusing heavily on the humorous aspects of Fudge's behavior, Blume neglects Peter. Thus, when Peter's parents finally give him overdue attention at book's end—sufficient enough for Blume—it seems

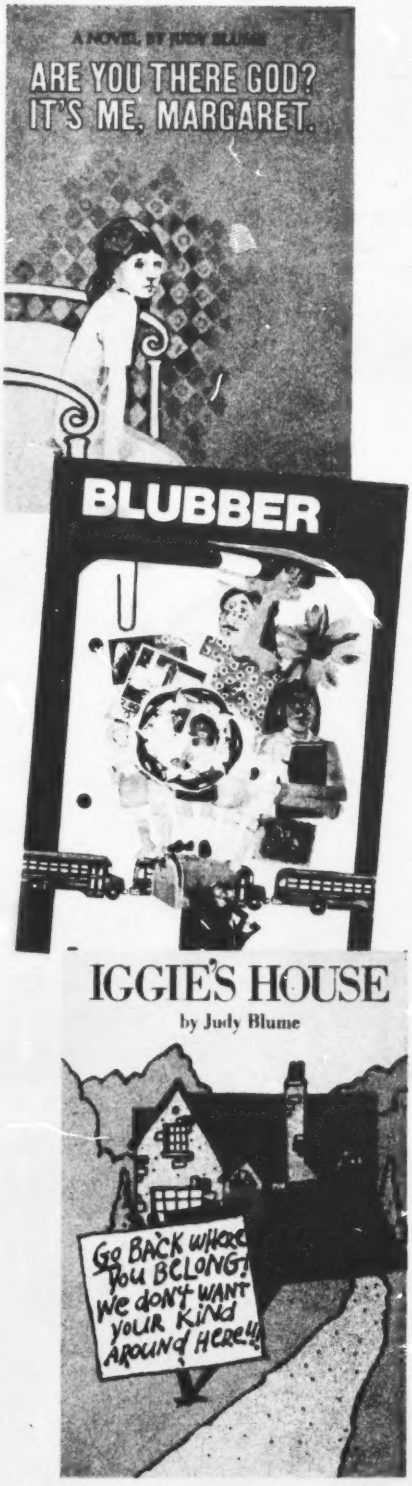
to the reader like too little, too late. One senses that despite the author's intentions, Peter will continue to feel like a "nothing" way past the fourth grade.

In *Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great*, another book which is funny at times, we have a frightened ten-year-old girl whose insecurity manifests itself in chronic lying, boasting and competitiveness. Unfortunately, the book never rises above being a chronicle of Sheila's dissembling and ends with the girl's unpleasant character virtually intact. One wonders what the point is, and the mind boggles to find a reviewer in *Publishers Weekly* calling *Sheila* an "absolute lark of a book" (Aug. 14, 1972).

Blubber, the most poorly resolved story of the lot, also features an obnoxious, nasty hero. This time it is fifth grade Jill Brenner who, along with her school friends, guiltlessly harasses and terrorizes a fat girl they have dubbed "Blubber." In the confusing and unreal ending, Jill comes to Blubber's defense only because another harasser is threatening to dominate the group, not because harassment as such is inhumane. The pack then turns on Jill, who glibly out-talks them, imparting the lesson that if you have a quicker lip than everyone else you can survive and keep the pack off your back. If not, watch out. Most unsatisfactory reading.

Competition Emphasized

In addition, these three stories offer a picture (present as well in some of the other books) of terrific competitiveness between children—friends, siblings, schoolmates and sexes. While Blume undoubtedly wishes to tell-it-like-it-is and capture what she probably views as the reality of kids' competitive drives, something is way off. The implication is that competition and even misogyny are natural, universal, even sort of "cute" childhood traits. Many in our society mistakenly assume that these forms of behavior are universal "truths of human nature." In fact, they are not necessarily basic to all children, and it has been demonstrated that in some societies such behavior is actually considered abnormal. While Blume does, at times, present children as loving and supportive, a more politically conscious or understanding writer would have proceeded differently. Bent on creating new kinds of anti-


A NOVEL BY JUDY BLUME
ARE YOU THERE GOD? IT'S ME, MARGARET.
BLUBBER
IGGIE'S HOUSE
by Judy Blume
GO BACK WHERE YOU BELONG! WE DON'T WANT YOUR KIND AROUND HERE!!

Above are some best-selling Blume titles. Dell has 1,775,000 paperback copies in print of seven Blume books and receives mail to the author at the rate of 25 letters per week.

competitive, anti-sexist, loving children, the writer would not create such mean characters without somehow making clear to readers that competitiveness is destructive and unnecessary for survival. Not to do this seems irresponsible, giving children a go-ahead to be smart-alecky and nasty.

Feminism Is Absent

Another area in which Blume must be faulted concerns feminism, or rather her lack of it. Despite her "timely" subject matter and "progressive" treatment of sex and body functions, in other respects Blume seems quite conventional and outdated. With the exception of *Deenie*, her perspective seems to be virtually untouched by the women's movement.

Although six of Blume's eight main characters are girls, not one fights the feminist fight—that is, struggles consciously to change the second-class status of her girlhood. Only in *Deenie* is there any clear feminist sentiment, expressed (for example) in the hero's unequivocal support of her tough girl friend who would rather "be on the football team than cheer for it," and who intends to sue the school if not given the chance. In general, the girl characters are more or less 1950's types—cute, sometimes tom-boyish, smart-alecky, precocious. They are not girls who are bent on changing the society in which they live, or who want to take new, assertive, out-front postures in life. (The one exception here is Winnie of *Iggie's House*, who single-handedly, albeit ineptly, tries to fight racism in her neighborhood.)

Traditional Sex Roles

Sex roles are rarely questioned. One of the few instances occurs in *Deenie*, when the hero consciously rejects the housewife role and wishes, instead, to be a doctor or lawyer. There is no question, for example, that the mother rather than the father will keep the kids after divorcing in *It's Not the End of the World;* it is "cute" when Peter Hatcher's father is totally inept at caring for his kids while his wife is away and "cuter" still when he plots to leave all the dishes for his wife's return. And Winnie's mother—unchallenged by author Blume—won't take out the garbage because it's a "man's job." Finally, despite Blume's frank handling of sexuality,

EIGHTH ANNUAL CONTEST FOR THIRD WORLD WRITERS

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CONTEST ENDS DEC. 31, 1976

even this seems dated. Girl characters are into such things as shaving their legs and cosmetics (*It's Not the End of the World*) or are obsessed with bras and developing breasts like those of *Playboy* bunnies (*Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret*).

Confusion on Racism

Blume's treatment of ethnic and racial issues is equally wanting and limited in scope. The Miglione family of *Then Again, Maybe I Won't* is Italian, and the Garbers who move into *Iggie's House* are Black, but the only other ethnic representations are half-Jewish Margaret, Deenie's Jewish girl friend and the Chinese American girl friend in *Blubber*.

In *Iggie's House*, Blume makes her one and only attempt at an anti-racist statement by having Winnie start a one-girl crusade against her neighborhood's racist reaction to new Black neighbors. However, a confused picture is presented as to what is racist and what isn't. Winnie's parents, for example, are very racist and spend a large portion of the book trying to "make up their minds" whether or not to sign a petition against the Black family. Although they are never seriously forced to confront and deal with their own racism, Blume nevertheless portrays them as likeable, positive people. When Winnie, a confused "liberal" herself or the race issue, defers to her family in the final scene, readers might easily deduce that the parents' racist position is really OK after all. Moreover, the Black viewpoint, though represented to some extent through the character of a Black boy, is not strong enough to provide real illumination of the issues for readers.

Middle-Class Settings

The class setting of Blume's books is usually middle and mostly suburban. Only Deenie's family and the Migliones in *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*, are working class, and the latter is the only Blume book to discuss class issues. While the author shows that a rise in class status can mean a lowering of humanitarian impulses, one questions why the author chose a working-class family of Italian descent to make her point.

Judy Blume is obviously concerned about focusing, in her work, on the real interests, needs and experiences of children in reality-oriented situations. The popularity of her books attests to the fact that, overall, she has caught the tempo of contemporary pre-teen attitudes and behavior. However, while a first reading of her books is, in many cases, a "fun" experience, questionable hidden messages become perceptible the second time around. We must, therefore, regretfully conclude that notwithstanding her writing skill, keen wit and effective handling of sexual material, her social consciousness is largely underdeveloped. (A check of 32 reviews of Blume's books in sources such as *Kirkus Reviews*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Library Journal* and the *New York Times Book Review* reveals mixed feelings on the part of other adult reviewers as well. Of the 32 reviews, 17 are favorable, 6 mixed and 9 negative—the latter are negative for different reasons than this reviewer would have chosen.)

Increasingly, books for juveniles—like Blume's and those of many other authors—include subject matter of social relevance. But even though authors' treatment of such subject matter is frequently inadequate by our standards—as in the case of Blume—their books can be used in the classroom to stimulate discussion. We view the educational usefulness of such discussions as being three-fold: 1) they may serve to expose the likes, dislikes and values children already possess and bring to bear on their reading experiences; 2) they may aid the development of healthy self-criticism; and 3) they may aid the development of children's critical faculties vis-à-vis the content of all media.

Books Discussed In This Article

[1]*Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*. Bradbury, 1970; Dell (paper), 1970.
[2]*It's Not the End of the World*, Dutton, 1972.
[3]*Blubber*, Bradbury, 1974; Dell (paper), 1976.
[4]*Iggie's House*, Bradbury, 1970; Dell (paper), 1976.
[5]*Deenie*, Bradbury, 1973; Dell (paper), 1973.
[6]*Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, Bradbury, 1972; Dell (paper), 1976.
[7]*Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great*, Dutton, 1972; Dell (paper), 1976.
[8]*Then Again, Maybe I Won't*, Bradbury, 1971; Dell (paper), 1973.

Bilingual children's books are still rare enough to merit review even when their quality is undistinguished. It is good for Chicano children to have books about people with whom they can identify to some degree. Such books represent an important first step, after years of subjection to Dick and Jane. The following two books are written in Spanish and English, with both texts on the same page.

¡Perico Bonito! (Pretty Parrot!)

by Monica Gunning,
illustrated by Suzanne Plummer.
Prism Press (Blaine Ethridge Books),
1976, $4.95, 50 pages, grades p.s.-3

Señora Pepino and Her Bad Luck Cats

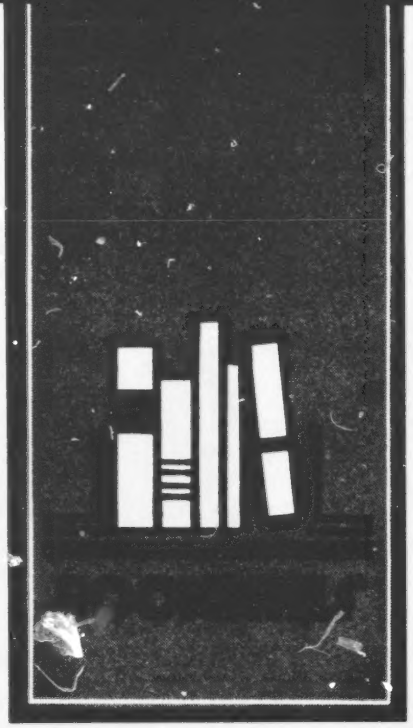
by Esther de Michael Cervantes
and Alex Cervantes,
illustrated by Alex Cervantes.
Prism Press (Blaine Ethridge Books),
1976, $4.95, 50 pages, grades 1-5

¡Perico Bonito!, an animal story set on the small farm of a poor Mexican family, concerns a parrot who creates confusion by imitating all the animals and humans on the farm. Banished from the house, the parrot finally wins everyone's respect when he saves the young daughter from drowning in a pond by imitating her cries for help.

This book does little, directly, for the self-images of Chicano or Mexican children and is even slightly racist in its repetition of that old siesta image. We've had enough sleeping Mexicans! Material trappings such as clothes and touches of household routine provide the only other "cultural" content.

Female images suffer in the story's depiction of a forceful father and active sons juxtaposed with a housewife-mother and helpless daughter. And, as in *Señora Pepino* (see review below), an accident is the key to the parrot's salvation.

A positive feature of the book is that it explores sounds in a fun way through the parrot's imitations, and the written sounds are particularly enjoyable because of the bilingualism. The story is also well written and illustrated.



Assuming that urban Chicano children can identify with the "classic" peasant family depicted here (which is questionable) the book is useful simply because it is not the usual white, middle-class children's story.

Señora Pepino and Her Bad Luck Cats is also an animal story, set in the home of a middle-class Spanish-speaking woman in an unidentified place. When Señora Pepino brings home a lost calico kitten (believing that calicos are lucky), her two Siamese cats become jealous. They proceed to frame the kitten by making various household messes for which the kitten is blamed and caged as punishment. In the final incident, they knock over an iron which starts a fire. The calico kitten warns Señora Pepino and the fire is put out. The two Siamese are exposed for their trickery and all three cats live, henceforth, in peace.

While this little tale seems innocuous enough, it has an escapist message: Only through an accident is the kitten's standing with Señora Pepino redeemed. Young readers might be encouraged to wait for some miracle which will allow them to appear heroic like the kitten and thus be accepted.

Other drawbacks are that the book does little directly to enhance the Spanish-speaking child's self-image—especially if that child is a girl. Señora Pepino is portrayed as a helpless, not-too-bright, frantic housekeeper. Although the story's sexism is not of the most offensive kind since the woman's main role is that of a foil for the conflict of the cats, it is present nevertheless. There is no Chicano or Mexican cultural content to speak of. Lastly, the advanced Spanish vocabulary does not seem appropriate for such an elementary story.

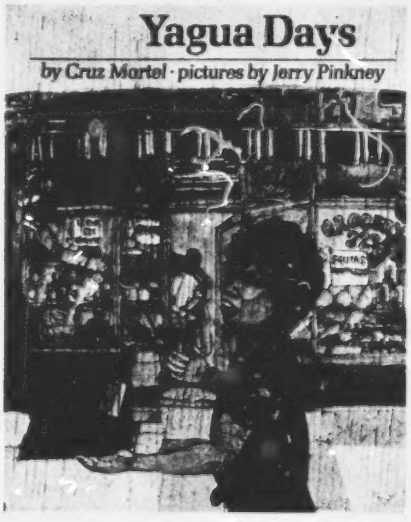
On the positive side, the story demonstrates the destructiveness of jealousy and encourages cooperation rather than competitiveness. The writing is interesting and suspenseful, and the drawings are lively. [Elizabeth Martinez]

Yagua Days

by Cruz Martel,
illustrated by Jerry Pinkney.
Dial Press, 1976,
$5.95, unpaged, grades k-4

Yagua Days tells the story of a Puerto Rican boy, born in New York, who lives on the Lower East Side where his parents operate a *bodega* (a vegetable and grocery store).

Since school has just closed for the summer, Adan is anxious to play in the park—but it's raining. Complain-



ing to the local mailman who notices Adan's long face, he is told that rainy days are marvelous: They are "yagua days."

A subsequent trip to Puerto Rico by Adan and his parents confirms the mailman's statement: When it rains and the grass on the mountain near the home of Adan's relatives becomes slick, everyone dons a bathing suit and bellyflops down the mountain into the river below on a *yagua*—a huge palm leaf.

Cruz Martel has written an enjoyable story, beautifully illustrated by Jerry Pinkney, that is rich in authentic cultural content. Adan's relatives in Puerto Rico are a variety of colors in keeping with the racial diversity of Hispanic cultures. The foods cited and the reminiscences of Adan's elders, as they ride through the countryside in a jeep, convey the beauty and timelessness of "grass roots" life.

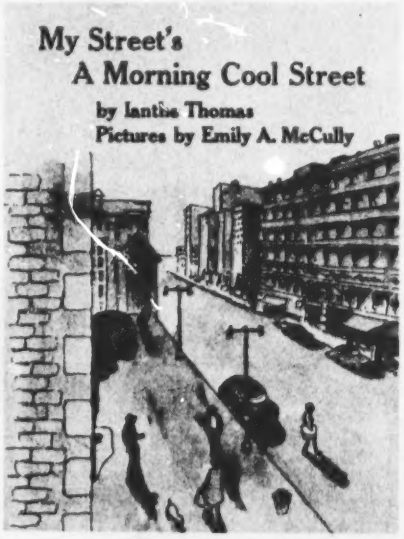
In manuscript form, *Yagua Days* was a winner in the CIBC Contest for Third World writers in 1972. [Carmen Figueroa]

My Street's a Morning Cool Street

by Ianthe Thomas,
illustrated by Emily McCully.
Harper & Row, 1976,
$4.95, unpaged, grades pre k-3

On his way to school, a little boy celebrates the happenings on his street. A dog chases a cat, the fruit man rolls his wagon through a cloud of flies and neighbor Roberta's hopscotch markings get washed away by the sanitation truck.

Although there are no lessons to learn or morals to consider in this story, it is a pleasant one enhanced by expressive three-color drawings which helps attune young children's senses to what is going on in their environments and to the diversity of human activity. Unfortunately, however, it also communicates to children that men dominate community life. Except for a woman selling a newspaper to a nurse, all of the other women depicted in the drawings have home-related, child-caring roles. The author and illustrator might have represented



women in a wider variety of roles without altering the basic theme of the story.

The simple language and animated pictures can be used in the classroom as mini-studies. Children could discuss why the butcher is annoyed with the meat delivery man, or why the man is carrying his baby into a bar. Other questions to raise might be why does the man in the large green hat appear so mysterious? Does the white man buying the book in the Afro-American bookstore live in the community? Perhaps the essence of this story lies not in what is said, but in what is left unsaid. [Emily R. Moore]

Cuba Today

by Lee Chadwick,
illustrated with photos.
Lawrence Hill & Co. [Westport, Conn.], 1976,
$7.95, 226 pages, grades 7-up

This book is a report on the author's four months of travel in Cuba during 1971 and 1975. Children and the family were the focus of her visits, so the book contains some information (though not a great deal) on such topics as the Revolution's philosophies of child care and children's literature and the recently adopted Family Code. (The latter makes Cuba the first nation to legislate equality between women and men in household matters.)

But aside from this information, the book is boringly written and contains numerous mistakes in Spanish, as well as in English punctuation and grammar. It is also pedantic and full of travelogue-type comments such as "I was fortunate enough to . . ." and "I am indeed grateful for . . . ." [Elizabeth Martinez]

The Creoles of Color of New Orleans

by James Haskins,
illustrated by Don Miller.
T.Y. Crowell, 1975,
$5.95, 128 pages, grades 5-up

This non-fiction work describes the past and present of Louisiana's so-called free men of color, better known as Creoles—a conglomeration of octoroons, quadroons and mulattoes whose origins date back to the founding of the territory.

Section I traces the origins of this racially mixed group whose members are the descendants of African, French, Spanish and West Indian peoples.

The slaves who were brought to the French settlement of New Orleans in the early eighteenth century were not, according to this study, treated as harshly as were slaves in other parts of the U.S. since their labor was wanted solely for building the city and not for plantation maintenance. (Does that make their status as slaves less onerous?) Although the Code Noir (Black Code), a set of laws formulated by the French to regulate relations between Blacks and whites, forbade interracial marriages, a later revision granted to freed slaves the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by whites. It was this edict which made possible the emergence of the "free men of color"—a distinct cultural group within U.S. society.

However, it was not until Louisiana came under Spanish rule that the Creoles were able to exercise their rights and privileges. At that time, they began to own property, accumu-

late wealth and even acquire slaves. They rejected class or racial identification with Blacks and emulated whites; yet whites lumped them with Blacks and discriminated against them accordingly.

In this first section and throughout the book, the author openly discusses the prejudice and snobbery of the Creoles—their alienation from Blacks and their pride in liaisons with whites—as a point of distinction and pride. Yet, he does not pursue these matters in a context that would help readers place the Creoles' self-hating and elitist values in the proper perspective. Such a framework is necessary to foster understanding of the Creoles' value system as the product of a racist environment.

Instead, the author presents the Creoles' negative opinions and beliefs about Blacks, Native Americans and others with little interpretive commentary, which has the effect of extolling the virtues of the Creoles at the expense of others.

By the time readers reach Section II, which focuses (again, out of context) on the family life, occupations, education and religion of contemporary Creoles, they would probably be turned off. And the final section, which discusses the Creoles' contributions to U.S. society, would no doubt elicit total disinterest following as it does 107 pages of racist, elitist, and conformist drivel.

Although the mediocre black-and-white illustrations are compatible with the text, they do not enhance it. [Patricia Spence]

Big Sister Tells Me That I'm Black

by Arnold Adoff,
illustrated by Lorenzo Lyncy.
Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976,
$4.95, 19 pages, grades pre k-3

Arnold Adoff's latest illustrated poem-story is difficult to describe because there's so little substance to it. What it amounts to is a little boy singing the lessons he learns from his older sister who tells him things like he's Black, proud and smart and one day will grow up to become a strong Black man.

Phrases like "hip hip/wish i may/ who say/black today/. . . hip hip/ wish i night/i say black tonight" or "a b/c ok/a b/i'm smart today" seem very contrived, while other lines such as "big sister says that I'm black/she tries to keep me right on track" are trite. Nor do they reflect the real texture of an urban Black child's speech (the illustrations show a Black boy in an urban setting).

Even after four readings, the book seems not to communicate "valuable lessons of self-love and survival" or any of the other well-meaning concepts mentioned on its jacket.

Merely "telling" children they're Black, smart, strong or proud is not communication. The illustrations convey more than the verses. Priced at $4.95, *Big Sister Tells Me That I'm Black* is something of a rip-off. [Patricia Spence]

Equal! The Case of Integration vs. Jim Crow

By Leonard A. Stevens.
Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1976,
$5.86, 157 pages, grades 7-up

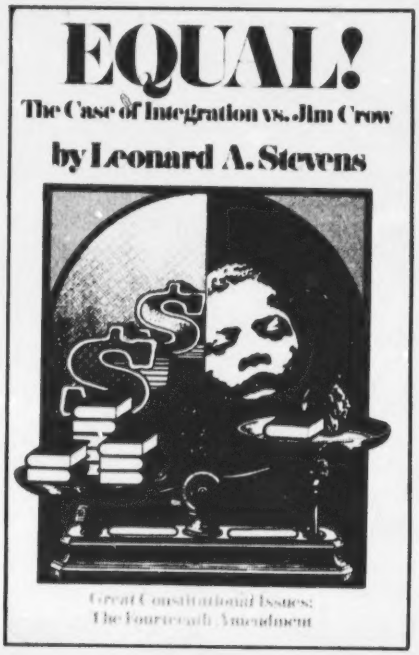
Equal! is an account of Black people's struggle to secure the civil and human rights which have systematically been denied to them since the end of slavery through the very judicial process that is alleged to support those rights. Stevens uses a dramatic (but non-committed) you-are-there approach to expose the life and times of "Jim Crow" from the mid-nineteenth century up to and including the 1970's.

Stevens writes that individuals began to challenge segregation laws soon after emancipation. Examples. In 1879, William R. Davis attempted to enter the Grand Opera House in New York City but was turned away by the doorman; his case went to the Supreme Court but was lost. In 1883, the case of Bird Gee who had been refused service in a hotel dining room was lost when the Supreme Court justices declared that the Fourteenth Amendment did not protect Blacks against segregation in the private sector. In the same decision the Civil Rights Act of 1875 was declared unconstitutional.

Unfortunately, Stevens' non-committal portrayal of segregation leaves judgments such as that in the Gee case unchallenged. The seriousness of this flaw in the author's approach is particularly evident in his discussion of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). In making their plaintiff's case against social discrimination on streetcars, the young white attorneys argued that states had no right to "label one citizen white and another colored" and that Plessy's large percentage of white blood was valuable property deserving of constitutional protection. Not only were Jim Crow laws preposterous, so were many of the arguments used against them and Stevens should have made that point.

What comes through loud and clear in the book is that the legislative and judicial system itself supported and legitimized segregation throughout the entire country—not just south of the Mason-Dixon line.

Furthermore, Stevens does not lead his readers to believe that Jim Crow died with the Supreme Court decision



in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) striking down the separate but equal doctrine. His text clearly reveals that Jim Crow has struggled more violently to stay alive since that time.

A careful reading of this book will provide young people with some insight into the scope of the unending struggle for equality. However, its use in the classroom should definitely be supplemented with numerous other materials. [Emily Moore]

Lion Yellow

by Betty Dinneen,
illustrated by Charles Robinson.
Henry Z. Walck, 1975,
$6.95, 169 pages, grades 7-up

Lion Yellow is a beautifully written tale about a British family who are wardens on a game preserve in Kenya, and a lion family living on that preserve. Their stories are intertwined. Soldani, the head of the lion pride, is challenged by Black Prince, a strange, formidable lion that suddenly appears from unknown parts. At the same time, the wardenship of Ben Thorne and his family over Mbuyu Game Park is questioned when a neighboring people claim the land by ancestral birthright. The Kenyan government must decide whether these people should graze their cattle on the park land or whether the park should remain a haven for animals and tourists.

Anticipation grows as the family awaits a visit from Mr. Likimani, the government man from Nairobi. Meanwhile, the author heaps adventure upon adventure. The children, Robin and David, meet up with a rampaging rhino, wild dogs, cackling hyenas, scavenger jackals and lions, keeping a reader in page-turning suspense.

Predictably, Soldani defeats the invading lion and we can presume that Mr. Likimani will decide in favor of keeping the game reserve.

The pluses in this book are many. With the importance of wildlife conservation as its major statement, the book also seeks to express the validity of the land claim. In this regard, Ben Thorne's statement to his son is commendable: "Kenya's African-run now. It's time for the European to move over." Also, Ms. Dinneen's portraits of animals and of human-animal relationships is sensitive, and the relationship of the children to the environment, equally so. In addition, the finely crafted story is culturally informative about the Masai people.

Unfortunately, *Lion Yellow* is plagued with sexism. Robin and David are gross stereotypes. With Tarzan as his idol, David calls himself "Lion Boy," and is strong, daring and fearless. He is usually occupied rescuing sister Robin or coaxing away her tears. Robin, who is "small, bright-eyed, and curious," "chirped her own small tune," "wrinkled her small nose," and is relegated to "small," passive tasks. The mother's positive portrayal (she is a professional photographer) is overwhelmed with the "boys are special" statement this story makes. The line that takes the prize for sexism is: "But Lion Boy never cried."

The African characters, though present, are nearly invisible and are often cast as big playmate or as chauffeur to the children. Only Mr. Likimani achieves some distinction due to his decision-making power.

A study in symbolism, the story clearly establishes a parallel between the invading lion and Mr. Likimani. The one is an obvious contender for leader over the park lions; the other could be considered a contender for rule over the park land. The one is black-maned, and the other is black-skinned. Both are finally overcome. (The wild scavenger dogs are also black, with "fierce black faces.")

A disturbing undertone of elitism and Eurocentrism also mars the story. The Thornes are aristocrats of the bush, protecting it from insensitive "others." The name of the claim-making people is noteworthy on this account. "Wageni" is the Swahili word for "strangers"—a curious label for Africans in Africa. And, while few young readers can translate the frequent Swahili terms (there is no glossary), innumerable references by the European characters to "our land," "our park," "our home," etc., and allusions to the Wageni people as outsiders occur in precise English throughout.

Lastly, the bright and rainbow-tinted descriptions of the author are not apparent in the illustrations. The black-and-white drawings are not only devoid of color but also detail, and the facelessness of the Africans is racially insensitive and wholly inexcusable. [Nikki Grimes]

Around and Around—Love

by Betty Miles,
illustrated with photographs.
Knopf, 1975,
$2.50, 42 pages, grades p.s.-3

Consisting of 42 pages full of twice as many beautiful black-and-white photos, plus a minimal text, this book is a bargain at $2.50. Love—"When you feel it and know it, tell it and show it." Love—"It's hard to tell about, easy to show."

This is a warm, life-affirming little book. Love is shown as being valid all ways: Between people of all ages and all races, people who are friends, people who are parents, people who care about other people and people who care about pets. What a happy book to have around the house! Children will want to look through it time and time again. It can also serve as a springboard for many child-adult discussions—or even as a preface to hugging. [Lyla Hoffman]

African Adventure

by Marian Hostetler.
Herald Press (Scottdale, Pa.), 1976,
$3.50 (hardcover), $2.50 (Kivar),
124 pages, grades 4-9

What a shame that a church-affiliated publishing house (in this case, the Mennonite Church) would issue such an example of hardcore racism as *African Adventure.*

Sprinkled throughout this account of a white Illinois family's sojourn as leaders of an agricultural workers' team in the north central African republic of Chad are descriptions of African children as "dirty-looking," the initially challenged but finally accepted appellation "boy" to describe male domestics, and insinuations that Muslim Africans must be Christianized in order to be "saved."

The story, told by a pre-teenage girl, fails completely to place the hunger, disease, illiteracy and underdevelopment encountered by the family in their proper context—colonialism and imperialism. Rather, they are treated as natural phenomena to be overcome through religious faith and white leadership.

"Lighter-skinned" people are portrayed as the protagonist's friends and protectors, while Black rebel soldiers (causes of the rebel activity are virtually unidentified) are villainous and threatening. Same old images. This one is a real no-no. [Zalamaqhawe]

Basil in Mexico

by Eve Titus,
illustrated by Paul Galdone.
McGraw-Hill, 1976,
$5.95, 96 pages, grades 3-up

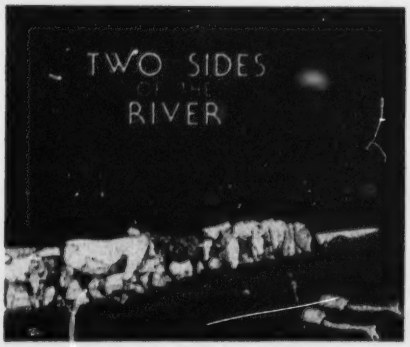
Detective Basil, a mouse who emulates Sherlock Holmes—the master of the house he lives in—has apparently become a popular figure in children's literature. In this, the author's fourth book about Basil, the hero is invited to Mexico to solve a crime of national proportions: the theft of the beloved *Mousa Lisa* painting from the state museum. He solves the mystery in typical Holmes style and then has another adventure when his sidekick, Dr. Dawson, is kidnapped by Professor Ratigan, the Crown Prince of Crime in mousedom.

This is the kind of children's book that delights adults—a clever, imaginative and well-illustrated adaptation of the original Sherlock and his entire style, from deer-stalker cap to clipped, sardonic speech. But one wonders what children unfamiliar with Sherlock and the milieu of paintings and museums would make of it. One must also question the creation of a totally human world among mice. Children will learn nothing about animals or about the relationship of humans to the rest of nature from this book. It is a clever replica, period.

Detective Basil is very much the upper-class gentlemouse, just as elitist as the original Holmes. When he learns that the thief is actually the museum curator, an incurably ill old man who just wants to have the *Mousa Lisa* in his home to brighten his last days, the compassionate Basil keeps the thief's identity a secret and simply announces that the painting has been mysteriously returned. After so much talk about the Mexican people's love for the painting, this ending has a somewhat paternalistic ring: "We, the brilliant detective and the erudite curator, will deal with the problem. No need to tell the people." (In fact, the people don't even know the painting has been stolen; a copy is hung in its place immediately following the theft.) In keeping with his autocratic style, Basil never consults anyone.

Basil is also a sexist, although in this book he does get reprimanded by a "liberated" female mouse. But sexism taints the total effect of the book nevertheless: No female mouse does anything daring or clever, and the mystery is entirely solved by male mice—including seven street youths.

For the most part, the Mexican setting is handled in a non-racist way, but there are some stereotypes. When Basil disguises himself as a Mexican vendor of roasted corn, he becomes "sleepy-eyed" (miraculously, he does not take a siesta). El Bruto, who seeks to overthrow the mouse government of Mexico, is the classical sly, cruel, Latin-American dictator. Apparently, Third World peoples have a monopoly on sly, cruel dictators. [Elizabeth Martinez]



Two Sides of the River

by David Crippen,
illustrated by David Scott Brown.
Abingdon, 1976,
$4.25, 27 pages, grades k-up

Two Sides of the River is the story of two groups of Kenyan children whose families have carried on a feud for generations. Each day when Makokha and his brother, Wnaga, drive their father's cattle to the water to drink they exchange insults across the river with Otaha and *his* brothers in a ritual of family enmity. One day Otaha's youngest brother is accidentally left behind and begins to drown in a switch current. Since Otaha is out of earshot, Makokha quickly decides that family feuds have no place in such life-death situations; he dives in and rescues the young boy.

Regaining consciousness after his near-drowning, Otaha's brother is speechless before his rescuer, but the heavy silence is weighted with possibilities that didn't exist before.

David Crippen has created a story which lauds brotherhood and suggests that the positive action of a single person is the beginning of meaningful change.

Although it has saccharine "Do unto others" overtones and repeats, again, the overworked cliché of African tribal conflict, the story effectively imparts a good lesson. The illustrations are beautiful. [Nikki Grimes]

In the BOOKSHELF, a regular *Bulletin* feature, all books that relate to minority themes are evaluated by members of the minority group depicted.—Editors.

CIBC Publishes Landmark Instrument for Rating Children's Books

A pioneer publication of the CIBC has just been released: *Human (and Anti-Human) Values in Children's Books* is the first volume on record which offers reviews of children's books based on criteria that focus primarily on content and only secondarily on literary and artistic elements. The criteria, developed by the Council over a ten-year period, are set forth in the 280-page book's introduction and expressed in a unique content-rating instrument designed to help parents, librarians and teachers detect the "hidden messages" and implied values in children's literature (see box).

Analyzing 235 books published in 1975, the multiracial Council team of 44 reviewers was concerned with signs of ageism, conformism, escapism, elitism and materialism, in addition to racism and sexism. The reviewers also comment, in their evaluations, on cultural authenticity and other factors which readers are encouraged to draw upon in developing their own guidelines.

The highest ratings for the year were given to 14 titles, and 20 other books were considered to be "noteworthy." A list of these titles, categorized by age level, follows this item.

Detailing the book's concept, the introduction states: "If we did not believe that most 'human nature' is in fact cultural conditioning, there would be little point in publishing this book. If we believed that human beings are doomed to continue crippling and destroying each other without end, there would be no point at all. But we do not; we firmly believe that when the cultural environment is changed, people will change. We reject that vision of the future which portrays human beings as oxen forever yoked to the painful weight of so-called 'human nature.' We reject it for the sake of our own lives and, above all, for the generations of children now and tomorrow."

Among the prominent figures who have responded favorably to the publication are Alvin Poussaint and Donnarae MacCann. Dr. Poussaint, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and co-author of *Black Child Care*, has called the book "one of the most important and challenging volumes in a decade. . . . If used widely, it will help raise a new generation of children free of many of the destructive values in our society." Ms. MacCann, a librarian and co-author of *The Black American in Books for Children*, *The Child's First Book* and of "Illustrations in Children's Books" (in the *Arbuthnot Anthology of Children's Literature*), has deemed the book "an historic event . . . splendidly comprehensive . . . authoritative . . . illuminating." In addition, The Feminist Press has said that the book "clarifies the political nature of children's books and should be used in every children's literature course in the country."

Council director Bradford Chambers has expressed the hope that the book will "substantially impact on the publishing of children's books in the U.S."

Human (and Anti-Human) Values in Children's Books is available in hardcover and paperback, costing $14.95 and $7.95 respectively. Copies can be purchased from the CIBC offices, 1841 Broadway, Room 300, New York, N.Y. 10023.

The following books were singled out for praise:

HIGHEST RATING

YOUNGEST BOOKS

Around and Around—Love by Betty Miles, illustrated with photographs. Knopf.

Hooray For Me by Remy Charlip and Lillian Moore, illustrated by Vera B. Williams. Parents' Magazine Press.

MIDDLE BOOKS

New Life: New Room by June Jordan, illustrated by Ray Cruz. T.Y. Crowell.

Paul Robeson by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by George Ford. T.Y. Crowell.

Sing to the Dawn by Minfong Ho, illustrated by Kwoncjon Ho. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

Song of the Trees by Mildred D. Taylor, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Dial.

OLDER BOOKS

Dragonwings by Lawrence Yep. Harper & Row.

Fast Sam, Cool Clyde & Stuff by Walter Dean Myers. Viking.

	ART	WORDS		ART	WORDS		ART	WORDS	N.A.
anti-Racist			non-Racist			Racist omission / commission			
anti-Sexist			non-Sexist			Sexist			
anti-Elitist			non-Elitist			Elitist			
anti-Materialist			non-Materialist			Materialist			
anti-Individualist			non-Individualist			Individualist			
anti-Ageist			non-Ageist			Ageist			
anti-Conformist			non-Conformist			Conformist			
anti-Escapist			non-Escapist			Escapist			
Builds positive image of females/ minorities			Builds negative image of females/ minorities				Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Inspires action vs. oppression			Culturally authentic			Literary quality				
						Art quality				

VALUES RATING CHECKLIST: Deciding whether a book is sexist (reinforces sexism), non-sexist (neutral), anti-sexist (challenges sexism), racist, non-racist or anti-racist, etc. forces a reader to analyze the value messages contained in a book. Unfortunately, very few books exist which challenge negative human values, "inspire action against oppression" and also are of "excellent" literary and artistic quality.

Founding Mothers by Linda Grant De Pauw. Houghton Mifflin.
Garden of Broken Glass by Emily Cheney Neville. Delacorte.
Let Me Be a Free Man by Jane B. Katz. Lerner.
Long Man's Song by Joyce Rockwood. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Making Our Way by William Loren Katz and Jacqueline Hunt Katz. Dial.
A Question of Courage by Marjorie Darke. T.Y. Crowell.

NOTEWORTHY

YOUNGEST BOOKS

Amy and the Cloud Basket by Ellen Pratt, illustrated by Lisa Russell. Lollipop Power.
Becky and the Bear by Dorothy Van Woerkom, illustrated by Margot Tomes. G.P. Putnam's Sons.
The Girl Who Would Rather Climb Trees by Miriam Schlein, illustrated by Judith Gwyn Brown. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
The Quitting Deal by Tobi Tobias, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. Viking.

MIDDLE BOOKS

Arthur Mitchell by Tobi Tobias, illustrated by Carole Byard. T.Y. Crowell.
Contributions of Women: Education by Mary Burgess. Dillon Press.
An Eskimo Birthday by Tom D. Robinson, illustrated by Glo Coalson. Dodd, Mead.
Last Night I Saw Andromeda by Charlotte Anker, illustrated by Ingrid Fetz. Henry Z. Walck.

OLDER BOOKS

After the Wedding by Hila Colman. Morrow.
The Cigarette Sellers of Three Crosses Square by Joseph Ziemian, translated by Janina David. Lerner.
Dust of the Earth by Vera and Bill Cleaver. J.B. Lippincott.
The Girl with Spunk by Judith St. George, illustrated by Charles Robinson. G.P. Putnam's Sons.
The Glad Man by Gloria Gonzalez. Knopf.
I Cry When the Sun Goes Down by Jean Horton Berg, illustrated with photographs. Westminster Press.
Julius Nyerere: Teacher of Africa by Shirley Graham. Messner.
Ludell by Brenda Wilkinson. Harper & Row.
A Man Ain't Nothin But a Man by John Oliver Killens. Little, Brown.
The Meat in the Sandwich by Alice Bach. Harper & Row.
Winter Wheat by Jeanne Williams. G.P. Putnam's Sons.
Women Who Win by Francene Sabin. Random House.

Guidelines for Writing Black Children's Books Discussed at Conference

The development of criteria for writing and illustrating Black-oriented children's books was the main topic of a conference on July 31 at The Teachers Incorporated in Manhattan. Members of the conference steering committee were Andaiye, a lecturer at Queens College; Tom Feelings, a leading children's book illustrator; Ernest Gregg, author of *And the Sun God Said That's Hip*, and Aishah S. Abdullah, 1974 winner in the African American category of the Council on Interracial Books for Children contest for Third World writers.

During the last ten years, publishers took advantage of the availability of money for book purchases in the Black community which resulted from the passage of the Secondary and Elementary Education Act. With the onset of the recession, cutbacks have been made, and "conscience money" has ceased to trickle into the Black community. Publishers are now reluctant to issue Black books unless the writers and/or illustrators are either established or their works are regarded as commercially viable.

The conference planners hoped to stimulate a dialog about the problems faced by Black children's book writers, leading to the creation of a cooperative of writers, illustrators, editors, librarians, parents and other concerned people.

A panel discussion, moderated by Andaiye, provided the core of the conference which was attended by over one hundred people. The panelists included Barbara Walker, an editor at Franklin Watts Publishers (and former CIBC staffer); Ms. Abdullah; Elton Fax, one of the first Black illustrators of children's books; Mr. Gregg; Jane Kerina, writer and lecturer at Brooklyn College; Mr. Feelings and librarian Vivian Grice.

The discussion (with audience participation) focused in part on a list of proposed criteria drawn up and distributed by the steering committee. Included in the nine-point proposal are categories on unity, self-determination, collectivity, characterization and language.

Although some members of the audience felt the proposal should be more specific and others called for its expansion, the consensus was that guidelines of this kind would be helpful to writers.

Playwright and author Oyamo made a special presentation in which he described his successful efforts to publish and distribute two of his own works—a children's story called *The Star That Could Not Play* and *Hillbilly Liberation*, a collection of plays.

For further information, contact Ernest Gregg at (212) 595-3223 or 34.

Calendar of CIBC Workshops

Midwest: September-October
Racism and Sexism in Instructional Materials. A series of CIBC workshops initiated this summer will be continued in the fall in Indiana school districts. For dates, contact Lethenius Irons, Assistant Director, EEO, Department of Public Instruction, State House, Indianapolis, Ind. 46204.

New England: September-October
Three **Racism Awareness Workshops** have been conducted during the summer in Burlington, Vt. with faculty and administrators of the University of Vermont, teachers and staff of the Chittenden South Supervisory School District, and parents from local communities. For information on followthrough and additional workshops during the fall, write Marvin Fishman, Department of Sociology, University of Vermont, 31 S. Prospect, Burlington, Vt. 05401.

Washington, D.C: October 10-12
First National Conference on Non-Sexist Early Childhood Education. Airlee House Conference Center, Airlee, Va. (outside Washington, D.C.). CIBC will conduct sessions on anti-sexist, anti-racist readers and trade books for children.

Lake Placid, New York: October 16
"What Should Youth Be Allowed to Know? A Conversation in Dichotomies." A CIBC presentation before the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the New York Library Association

"Gone With the Wind" Comes Back to Haunt Us

We are distressed to report that "Gone With the Wind," a movie which did so much to perpetuate stereotypes 30 years ago, will be televised nationally by NBC during prime time on October 28 and 29. The movie is a spectacular melodrama with an all-star cast (Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh, *et al.*) and, yes, it is technically a superb production; but it also perpetuates white supremacist myths of the "gracious" old South and the "corrupt" Reconstruction era.

We wish to alert teachers and librarians to the showing and to suggest that it be used to stimulate consciousness-raising class discussion, teach-ins, and, hopefully, protest actions in schools and libraries throughout the country. The very popularity of the movie makes it an ideal teaching tool to raise people's awareness of racism and sexism.

Here are the most noxious stereotypes: (1) The happy slave, passive, uncomplaining, well cared for; (2) white southerners as valiant cavaliers, struggling to defend a benevolent white aristocracy; (3) northerners as corrupt, power hungry invaders, cruel and rapacious; (4) whites generally as superior and Blacks as inferior beings—examples, the stupid and troublesome Prissie; the shuffling and helpless Porkie; the strong and devoted Sam; the gullible and forever-loyal Mammy. Blacks are shown only in their relationship with whites, never in relation to each other.

Note to Teachers: The following are preliminary suggestions, and if our readers indicate interest, we will amplify on these in future issues.

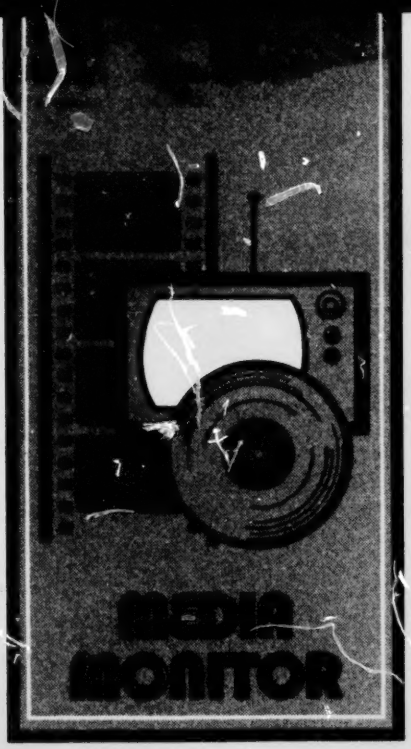
- Assign reading materials that will aid students in developing critical awareness of the film's racist and sexist content. Refer to the suggested reading in the footnote below.
- Instruct students to watch "Gone With the Wind" in preparation for discussions after the showing.
- Have students write critiques of the film, identifying as many stereotypes and historical distortions as they can find. Students who are teachers-to-be should prepare sample lesson plans indicating how they will teach *their* students to spot stereotypes and distortions.
- Write us about your experiences with the classroom discussions so we may share these with other teachers.

Note to Librarians: The promotion campaign which is planned for the telecast of "Gone With the Wind" will surely stimulate demands for the book in libraries across the country (Avon paperbacks is reissuing the book in a "deluxe trade edition"). This is an opportune time for librarians to implement the anti-racist, anti-sexist resolution recently adopted by the American Library Association.

- We suggest setting up a book exhibit of slavery, Civil War and Reconstruction era materials which accurately represent these periods. (See titles listed in the footnote below.)
- Plan a discussion of "Gone With the Wind" and invite representatives of Third World and feminist organizations to participate.
- Ask your local newspaper to run articles analyzing the stereotypes and distortions in the film.

Suggested Reading

American Negro Slave Revolts by Herbert Aptheker. International Publishers, 1952.
Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880 by W.E.B. DuBois. Atheneum, 1962.
Black Women in White America: A Documentary History edited by Gerda Lerner. Vintage, 1973.
Captain of the Planter by Dorothy Sterling; illustrated by Ernest Crichlow. Doubleday, 1958.
Flight to Freedom. The Story of the Underground Railroad by Henrietta Buckmaster. T.Y. Crowell, 1958.
Freedom Road by Howard Fast. Bantam, 1969.
Great Gittin' up Morning: A Biography of Denmark Vesey by John O. Killens. Doubleday, 1972.
Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railway by Ann Petri. T.Y. Crowell, 1955.
Life and Times of Frederick Douglass by Frederick Douglass. Collier-Macmillan, 1962.
Reconstruction After the Civil War by John Hope Franklin. University of Chicago Press, 1961.
To Be a Slave by Julius Lester, illustrated by Tom Feelings. Dial Press, 1968.
The Trouble They Seen: Black People Tell the Story of Reconstruction edited by Dorothy Sterling. Doubleday, 1976.



The Fight Against Sexism Begins at Home

As noted on page 6, the American Library Association has just adopted a resolution calling for the elimination of sexism and racism from the library profession. One place to begin would seem to be the ALA's own media campaign. Speaking for the ALA, Rodney Dangerfield says: "Hi. This is Rodney Dangerfield. You know me. I don't get no respect. . . . I want to give respect to a lot of very special people. They're the people at my neighborhood library. They did somethin' I couldn't do for years. They kept my wife quiet for three hours. My wife went in there lookin' for information on some flower or plant or somethin' like that. The librarian found her books on it, pictures on it, slides on it. She even found her a popular song with the name of the plant in the title. I tell ya' my wife was speechless. Librarian, for this I thank you. . . ."

The message ends with the words, "A public service message on behalf of the American Library Association."

Dissent Challenged

We were outraged to learn of the U.S. Department of Justice's order that the New York-based Tricontinental Film Center register as a "foreign agent." Tricontinental is an educational distributor of films from the Third World, including the critically acclaimed Cuban films "Lucia" and "Memories of Underdevelopment." Under the terms of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, Tricontinental would have to label its film catalog and all other printed materials as foreign propaganda.

The Justice Department's action clearly challenges the public's right of free access to information and is

Readers will be interested in an upcoming "Firing Line with William F. Buckley, Jr." which features poet-writer June Jordan representing the CIBC and civil liberties lawyer Harriet F. Pilpel discussing the First Amendment in relation to racism and sexism in books. The program is scheduled to be shown nationally on PBS, on RKO-TV (Los Angeles, Boston, Memphis) and in the New York area in early September; check local listings.

obviously aimed at curtailing dissent in the U.S.

In response to an appeal from Tricontinental, the CIBC, along with hundreds of other organizations and individuals, promptly forwarded letters to the Attorney General protesting the Department's action. The impact of this deluge of mail was apparently great. In reply to their inquiries, Tricontinental's attorneys were told by Justice officials that the order had been placed under review—although it has *not* been rescinded. The review process, as of this writing, has been going on for three months.

We strongly urge *Bulletin* readers to send letters or telegrams of protest calling for withdrawal of the registration order to the Justice Department. Recent press disclosures of illicit and illegal government actions against progressive people and organizations confirm the necessity of vigorous response on the part of all citizens to threats against our constitutional rights of dissent. Address your protests to Edward Levi, Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20530.

TV Sponsors and Violence

The results of a major study of advertiser sponsorship of violence in TV programming were announced by Nicholas Johnson, chairperson of the Washington-based National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting (NCCB) at a press conference in New York on July 29.

Based on the monitoring of prime time programming (8:00 to 11:00 P.M.) over a six-week period ending on July 23, the survey showed that Tegrin Shampoo and Burger King headed the list of sponsors associated with the most violence during the monitoring period and that IBM, Lipton products and Oscar Mayer products were among those associated with the least amount of violence. The survey also indicated that of the ten prime time shows containing the least amount of violence, five are on CBS, while NBC ranked foremost among the networks featuring shows containing the most violence.

Particularly significant, according to Johnson, was the survey's illumination of the fact that "most of the ten least violent programs are successful network offerings with high ratings—contrary to the common assertion that television programs can't attract large audiences unless they have excessive violence."

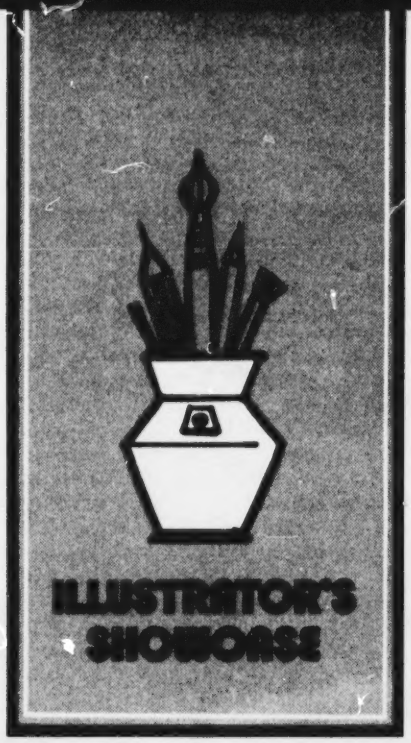
The computerized survey, which involved the gathering of masses of data, was financed by a $10,000 grant to NCCB from the Laras Fund and was structured by BI Associates, a firm which specializes in the monitoring of television spots. Brief, general reports of the survey results will be available to the public at no charge, while more detailed and specific areas of data will be provided on request for a fee to advertisers or their agents.

For further information, contact Ted Carpenter, (202) 466-8407 or write National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, 1028 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Room 402, Washington, D.C. 20036.

NOTE: SUBSCRIPTION RATE INCREASE!

Because of rising costs, we are forced to increase the cost of individual subscriptions to the BULLETIN. It is no longer possible to maintain the current rate of $8 per year and—very reluctantly—we must increase this price to $10. The subscription coupon on the back page reflects the increased rates. However, we are offering new readers and current subscribers the opportunity to subscribe or renew at the old rate. **Orders postmarked by Sept. 30th will be entered at the previous rates: $8 per year, $14 for two years, $18 for three years.** (These rates apply to individual subscriptions only and must be paid for with a personal check or money order which must accompany the order.) Take advantage of this offer now by completing the coupon on the back page and sending it with your check for the amount specified above!

EVERY LITTLE GIRL NEEDS HER BARBIE
Do you have a doll that plays like Billie Jean King, thinks like Margaret Mead and speaks out like Barbara Jordan?



This department brings the work of minority illustrators to the attention of art directors and book and magazine editors. Artists are invited to submit their portfolios for consideration.

Robert M. Waring, who studied at Pratt, the Brooklyn Museum Art School and the School of Industrial Arts, is a free-lance artist. Mr. Waring can be reached at 201 Clinton Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205; (212) 624-1457.

Tina Yvonne Utsey, a graduate of Parsons, is a free-lance artist. Ms. Utsey can be reached at 1085 Nelson Ave., #1E, Bronx, N.Y. 10452; (212) 538-3021.

Crystal McKenzie, a graduate of Cooper Union, is a free-lance artist and designer. Ms. McKenzie can be reached at 263 Eastern Parkway, Apt. 6G, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11238; (212) 857-7195.

Dear Asian American Children's Book Project:
I am tremendously impressed with your survey of children's books on Asian Americans [Vol. 7. Nos. 2 & 3]. . . . It is the best compilation of book reviews—children's or adult—that I have ever seen. I am particularly appreciative of your advanced political/historical perspective, and the very clear manner in which you express it.

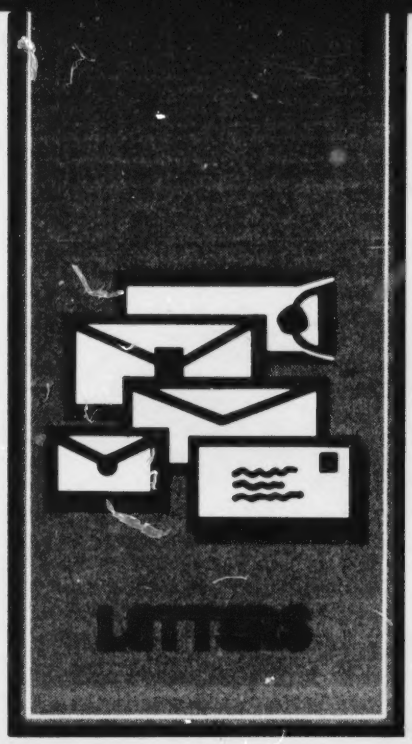
Five years ago during the infancy of Asian American studies for the elementary schools, we here in Berkeley attempted to review books being used in the local public schools. Today, I am rather embarrassed by our lack of political sophistication (especially regarding sexism), and if I were to re-write those reviews now, I would condemn some of the books I praised in 1971. . . .

I noted a few very minor technical errors in your survey, which in no way detracts from the excellence of your work, but I list them herein for your pursuance:

Page 3 (" . . . another about a Japanese boy's experience in a Canadian prison camp . . . "): I assume you are referring to *A Child in Prison Camp*, in which case you should know that Shizuye Takashima is a Japanese Canadian *woman*, and the book is about her childhood experience in a concentration camp for Japanese Canadians.

Page 19 ("All Japanese American soldiers were sent to the European front.") and page 20 (" . . . Nisei men . . . in Burma during World War II. Based on fact . . . "): The reviews for *Tradition* and *Burma Rifles* contradict each other. Actually, over 3,700 Japanese American soldiers did serve in the Asia/Pacific Theater, mostly as interpreters, but engaging in combat when necessity required. An almost equal number of Japanese Americans served in Asia/Pacific as Europe/Africa (approximately 4,000 each), but nearly all the attention has been focused on the more glamorous 442nd Regiment.

Page 20 ("Originally, because of his half-white status, Noguchi was not forced to go into a camp."): This statement needs clarification. The "Civilian Exclusion Order" applied to *all* persons of Japanese ancestry, however slight. Even orphan children of part Japanese ancestry living in orphanages were shipped off to concentration camps. A few exemptions were granted upon formal application,



but they were granted only to persons with 1/16 or less Japanese ancestry, or persons with white fathers (thus with European surname) who had "passed," i.e., lived totally as a white person. I do not understand how Noguchi or his biographer thought his entry into the concentration camp was in any way voluntary.

Raymond Okamura
Berkeley, Cal.

Dear CIBC:
The *Bulletin* on Asian Americans [Vol. 7, Nos. 2&3] is just terrific. I inhaled it immediately, for the benefit of myself, my children (I must confess to a number of racist gut reactions and would like for my kids to be relatively free of same)—and will pass the issue on to our school librarian, who has found the publication invaluable in judging and ordering books for the children of our school.

You really perform such a valuable service to us anti-racism racists who are stumbling along trying to overcome years of being conditioned to racism and accepting it. Hugs and hurrahs to you!

Dianne Spurgeon
Golden, Col.

Dear CIBC:
I wish that I had the wisdom to suggest a strategy for handling books such as *Little Black Sambo* and *The Five Chinese Brothers*. All that I can offer are some personal observations:

1. Relegating such books to a Historical Interest Shelf does provide a solution short of censorship. What are we to do, however, with all the other, less famous, titles in our library collections which are equally offensive? No Historical Interest Shelf is large enough to contain all the books that qualify for placement there.

2. When the racism of *Mary Poppins* was first revealed in the *Bulletin* [see Vol. 5, No. 3] many of us were shocked and dismayed, and immediately shared our new perceptions of this classic with teachers and children. Not wanting to practice censorship, we left the book on the shelves, but took care to make children aware of the offensive stereotypes it contained. In the short time that has passed since then, another "generation" of third and fourth graders is reading *Mary Poppins*. How many of us continue to take the time and effort to talk to these new readers about the racist stereotypes which the book contains? Do we simply assume that, by now, everyone is aware of the book's shortcomings and that, therefore, no introductory word of caution need be given?

This, it seems to me, is the crux of the matter: If we don't want to practice censorship by removing offensive books from the library shelves, then we must take responsibility for pointing out the racism and sexism of books in general, and those books in particular, on an annual basis to every new group of students and teachers with whom we work. This solution is not entirely satisfactory, either, because it sets up the librarian as a self-appointed interpreter of the truth, without whose guidance it is dangerous or even wrong for children to read. And who is to determine that the librarian's personal perceptions are without flaw?

Freedom of the press and freedom to read are precious to each of us, and must be maintained. At the same time, in my daily work, I see children picking up copies of *Mary Poppins* and *Pippi Longstocking* and know that, despite my efforts to make them aware of racism and sexism, they are not really prepared for what they will find inside.

I consider this matter of censorship *vs.* book selection and weeding to be the most important issue in library work today. I am continually ponder-

ing it, and am still perplexed by its complexities.

Judith Sloane Hoberman
Librarian
Spaulding School
Newton, Mass.

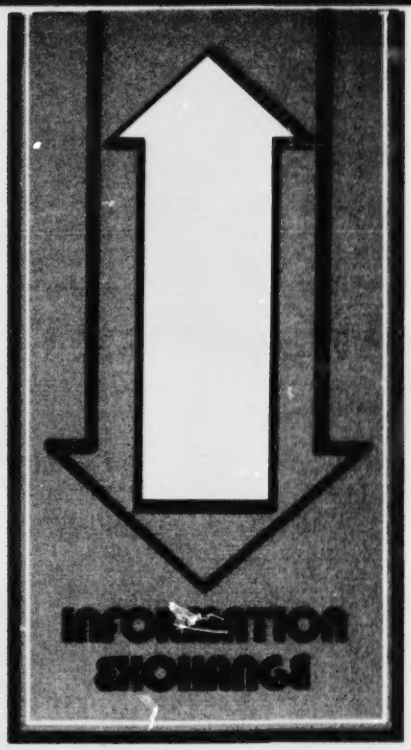
Dear CIBC:
Help! Help! The *Little Black Sambo* controversy still rages. Several of my fellow librarians are strenuously objecting to my decision to remove our copies from the picture book area and to place them in the "case" (mostly historical material of interest to children's literature students, not the children themselves. This material circulates, but needs to be requested, not just casually picked up while browsing). I thought such a measure reasonable, and at least partially satisfying to both sides. Unfortunately, I found that I was really trampling on the toes of those who revere it as a Holy of Holies, a classic, not to be tampered with at any cost. Therefore, will you please send me any suggestions or current information you have that would defend my position to remove *Little Black Sambo* from our picture book section.

Also, can you suggest any "acceptable" versions?

Heather Hall
Children's Librarian
Pikes Peak Regional Library District
Colorado Springs, Col.

We share Ms. Hall's concern about *Little Black Sambo*. We do not feel that there is an "acceptable" version (including Little Golden Books' 1976 edition) and suggest that librarians (1) place the book on a non-circulating reference shelf, (2) reclassify it from "juvenile" to "adult," (3) do not purchase it or replace lost or torn copies and/or (4) consider "weeding" it from their collection as the name "Sambo" is, in itself, insulting. We welcome suggestions from librarians and other concerned readers. A fuller discussion of *LBS* is presented in *"Little Black Sambo": A Closer Look*, available from the CIBC Racism and Sexism Resource Center for $2.50.—Editors.

We welcome letters for publication in the *Bulletin*, and unless advised to the contrary, we assume that all letters to the CIBC or *Bulletin* may be published.



La Confluencia is a **bilingual** journal publishing essays, fiction, poetry, case studies and book reviews on all facets of southwestern culture in the U.S. Each issue includes "notes from teachers" involved in a bilingual/bicultural classroom in the Southwest. Subscriptions to the quarterly are $8 ($6 for students and teachers, $20 for institutions). The address is 125 E. Santa Fe Ave., Santa Fe, N.M. 87501.

The Feminist Press has published a volume of *High School Feminist Studies*. Over 20 curricula for classes in history, literature and the social sciences have been contributed by teachers from around the country. Write for the Press' catalog to Box 334, Old Westbury, N.Y. 11568.

The most recent issue of *Edcentric, a journal of change* (#38) is an **educational resource directory.** It lists groups, publications, films, etc. in areas of anti-sexism, Third World, health and others. Single issues, $1; six-issue subscriptions are $6 for individuals, $10 for institutions. Write *Edcentric*, P.O. Box 10085, Eugene, Or. 97401.

"Resources" is a newsletter listing alternative products, services, publications, organizations, ideas and events. Subscriptions are $5 for 12 issues, and includes an index of past issues. Write Resources, Box 134, Harvard Square, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

The "Revista Chicano-Riqueña" is a bilingual journal of poems, short stories, plays, folklore and literary criticism by Chicanos and Puerto Ricans. Published quarterly for the last four years, the journal is available from Indiana University Northwest, 3400 Broadway, Gary, Ind. 46408 at the annual subscription rate of $5.

The National Children's Directory now being compiled by Urban Information Interpreters, Inc. will list local, state and national organizations active in the area of children's rights and welfare. The directory will include all groups seeking to bring about change in such areas as children's media, day care, public schools and legal rights of children. Organizations should send details of their activities for inclusion in the directory to UIII, P.O. Box AH, College Park, Md. 20740.

A new edition of the annotated bibliography of **women writers,** *Women and Literature*, will appear in September. The editor at the Sense and Sensibility Collective informs us that this edition will include many more Black writers and works for young readers than earlier editions. Write to the Collective, Box 441, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Most of the publications from Shameless Hussy Press are by **women writers,** both past and contemporary. One of their newest listings is Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*, a play that is currently an off-Broadway hit (paperback, $ .85). Write the Press at Box 424, San Lorenzo, Cal. 94580.

"Young Athlete" is a new bimonthly magazine that seeks to cover the gamut of sports and recreation for youngsters in a manner "free of racial or sexual biases." (Its editorial guidelines note that "hero worship and a 'winning at any cost' philosophy" are to be avoided.) Subscriptions are $6 a year from *Young Athlete*, P.O. Box 246, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054.

FROM RACISM TO PLURALISM: A Racism Awareness Training Kit

From Racism to Pluralism, an 18-minute sound and color 120-frame filmstrip with training kit and discussion guide, is available with cassette or record. This group process curriculum kit is suitable for pre-service and in-service human relations workshops, secondary school and college classes, church or community groups confronting racial issues.

"Highly recommended" by *The Booklist*, the publication of the American Library Association, which said:

"A sensitive personal narrative of a school superintendent is accompanied by a racial-awareness curriculum kit that may be used with individuals or groups in one 45-to-90-minute session or in workshops for educators on institutionalized racism and how it can be overcome. . . .

Strong in its presentation of such concepts as pluralism, in its clear definition of problems of prejudice and racism, and its insight into the effect of attitudes on the possible solution of problems. . . .

Although the kit treats its timely subject from a white adult's point of view, it is highly relevant for senior high students in black studies courses or in classes treating values. Teachers will find excellent directions for use, rationales, and time allotments for the activities for high school students; the "school checklist for cultural pluralism" will be valuable for use with adults. . . . this unique kit is highly recommended for classroom use, and was found to stimulate discussion, provide background facts, and clarify important concepts. Grades 9-12 and adult." [Jan. 15, 1976]

The Racism Awareness Training Kit includes three warm-up activities to whet the interest and insure the participation of all. The follow-up activities are structured so that the participants can learn how to turn from racism towards pluralism.

Training materials created by Dr. Patricia M. Bidol, former Superintendent of Schools, Baldwin, Mich. Dr. Bidol has conducted workshops for educators in 30 states. She is author of a curriculum, *New Perspectives on Race*, for secondary students.

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To order, send check or purchase order for **$32.50** to
The CIBC Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators
1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023

THE COUNCIL ON INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN: A BRIEF LOOK

The Council on Interracial Books for Children, a non-profit organization founded in 1966, is dedicated to promoting anti-racist and anti-sexist literature and instructional materials for children in the following ways: 1) by publishing this *Bulletin;* 2) by running a yearly contest for unpublished minority writers of children's literature; 3) by conducting clinics and workshops on racism and sexism; 4) by providing consultants and resource specialists in awareness training to educational institutions; and 5) by establishing the Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators, which publishes annual reference books, monographs, lesson plans and audio-visual materials designed to help teachers eliminate racism and sexism and to develop pluralism in education.

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